

WARNS ENGLAND OF RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE IN MONGOLIA



Washing gold on the Yero River.

Writers See Danger in Czar's Rapid Advance in Pushing China Out of Outer Mongolia and Urge Great Britain to "Spread Herself" Over Tibet to Offset Effect

RUSSIA is rapidly spreading herself over the market of Outer Mongolia and pushing China back and out. It would therefore seem that the time has arrived for Great Britain to "spread herself" over Tibet in some way that Russia is spreading herself over Mongolia, writes Sir Claude Macdonald, former British Minister at Peking and Ambassador at Tokio, in a preface to a new book on the Far East entitled "With the Russians in Mongolia" (John Lane Company).

The authors of the book are two Englishmen, H. C. Perry-Ayscough of the Chinese Postal Service and Capt. R. B. Otter-Barry of the Royal Sussex Regiment. Their journeys, made separately, took them through Mongolia proper, north and south and east and west, and together covered the majority of important places in the country. Mongolia proper cannot be said to be unknown, but it is certainly very little known. In view of the international questions raised by Russia's advance in Outer Mongolia the book is of timely importance, and besides it gives an interesting picture of the present condition of a once great race of conquerors.

Of Russia's plans in Outer Mongolia and their effect on British interests the authors say: "There seems no doubt that Russia's aim in obtaining a dominating influence in Mongolia has been in order to obtain a buffer State between herself and China. Her Eastern diplomatic authorities own that they fear that China may become some day too strong for Russia. Russia has had one experience of the rapid growth of an Eastern nation's military prowess, and she does not intend to allow China to talk her well laid plans. She fears Chinese insidious commercial enterprise, Chinese admirable colonial methods. She does not want China along her frontier, and the subsequent expense of a frontier line to guard."

From a British point of view one cannot help seeing the danger of any Russian influence in Mongolia. Tibet and Mongolia are very closely allied. Their religion is identical. Their population in both cases consists of fanatical followers of their respective spiritual leaders, the 'Dalai Lama' of Tibet, the 'Hu-tuk-tu' of Mongolia, the former being the spiritual head of the faith of both countries.

Lamas from Lhasa are constantly visiting Urga, and many Mongol Lamas receive their education in Lhasa. The dominating influence in either Mongolia or Tibet means the eventual dominating influence in both these countries. Russia is obtaining this influence in Mongolia. Great Britain might have obtained the same rights over Tibet as Russia has obtained over Mongolia, and Russian diplomats quite expected Great Britain to take this action.

Russia's advance in the East of late years has been rapid—far more rapid than would have been expected. She has chosen her opportunities well. Her manipulation of the Mongolian question was admirably carried out during the Chinese revolution, at a time when the eyes of Europe were riveted on the Balkan States and the consequent questions which were arising in the Near East.

"Russia is a virile race, possessing a country with endless resources. Her merchants are constantly seeking new ground where profits are large and easily obtained. It would be fatal to Great Britain to allow Russia to further increase her influence in Tibet."

Disease and unsanitary conditions aided by Lamaism are gradually reducing the population of Outer Mongolia. The people are too lazy to till the soil, but on trade as degrading and obtain a livelihood by the easy method of trading flocks.

The only gold mining concern, the Mongolian Mining Company, started by Victor von Grotte to develop the enormous mineral wealth in north Mongolia, was obliged to import Chinese labor from 1,000 miles away, simply because the Mongols refused at any price to work the mines. To the commercial men, the miner and the sportsman Mongolia opens up a fine field in the future, say the authors, and even the remote portion of the Gobi Desert, by the employment of artisan who can be converted into grazing land.

The Russians are endeavoring to counteract the deleterious power of the Lama by stimulating the Mongols to form a military force. The Mongols are horsemen and descended from a line of warriors and with wise training and leadership would compare well with the Chinese as soldiers.

Mongolia was known commercially to the Russians as early as the seven-

teenth century. After Russia's defeat in Manchuria in the disastrous war with Japan in 1904-5 she saw the necessity of obtaining a buffer State between her and China. The outbreak of the Chinese revolution in October, 1911, was a stroke of luck for her.

While China was harassed by her internal troubles Russia began a series of diplomatic moves having for their object the extension of her influence in Mongolia and the recognition of the autonomy of Mongolia under the nominal suzerainty of China. The Mongols are not altogether pleased by what amounts to a change from Chinese to Russian masters instead of being recognized as an independent nation, but they have not been consulted in the matter.

Capt. Otter-Barry went from Peking to Urga, the capital of Outer Mongolia, travelling by Kalgan over a railroad built by a Chinese engineer educated in America and crossing the Gobi Desert in an ordinary Peking country cart without springs. In the cart it was necessary to carry provisions for the men of the party and the horses and two water barrels. Capt. Otter-Barry thus describes the habitations of the Mongolian nomads:

"The Mongols call them yurts, and this one, in contrast to every yurt I afterward saw, was plastered over with mud. The principle of a yurt is very simple. There is an oval framework which will shut up like an umbrella, and when

Prince Han-Da-Van, Minister of Foreign Affairs, leader of embassies to St. Petersburg in 1911 and 1912.

it, the lower portion of this altar being used as a cupboard. A kind of long barrel made of skin is usually placed on the right of the door, and in this stands a wooden stick. Here the koumis is made from mare's milk, and every person entering the hut is supposed to give it a turn with the stick. "Koumis seems to act as food and drink to the Mongols when travelling hard, and I can well understand this, since I have often found a small drink of koumis revived me in a remarkable degree. The uninitiated, however, must be careful as to the quantity they drink, as it is a very intoxicating liquor."

Queer travellers are met in the desert, including horse traders, caravans and beggars. Among the queerest encountered by Capt. Otter-Barry were two Chinese:

"Between them they were trundling a



Mongol lady, children and nurse.

wheelbarrow. On this they had rigged up a sail, which with the prevailing wind from the north helped them considerably. They had packed on their barrow their few goods, but very little food, as they depended on getting this given them by other travellers or by the Mongols. They told me they covered an average of thirty-five miles a day."

There were also merchants in the desert:

"We came upon a small Chinese encampment of merchants selling cloth, grain, black tea and other necessities. The Mongols come in from all around the district to buy at this store."

"Their usual method of payment is to hand over a sheep, horse or ox to the merchant, who keeps a tally and informs the Mongol when he has taken the value of the animal out in stores. This does not seem very satisfactory for the Mongol, but then the Chinese merchant expects to make huge profits for his trouble and as the Mongol is as innocent as a child it is very easy to cheat him."



A Mongolian Princess.



Track skirting the River Chuya.



Kirghiz encampment and Kirghiz sportsman, with his hunting eagle.

and absorption of the people they have come into contact with."

It was in the desert that Capt. Otter-Barry heard this Mongolian nursery rhyme droned to a child to get it to sleep:

When he is big he'll ride a big horse,
Yai! yai! yai! yai! yai!
Then he will marry as a matter of course,
Yai! yai! yai! yai! yai!
What will he do when his children cry?
Yai! yai! yai! yai! yai!
Surely he'll do the same as I,
Yai! yai! yai! yai! yai!

"Da Huras," or the Great Monastery, the Mongol name of Urga, is symbolic of this ancient capital, signifying as it does the high place that religion occupies in the national life of the country. This sacred city is the home of the Hu-tuk-tu, the spiritual and temporal ruler.

The most interesting section of the town is Kurin, the purely native Mongol city, situated to the northwest of the town, from which the road to Kialcha leaves Urga. Temples, university and convents and huts jostle one another. One temple encloses a gigantic Buddha 100 feet high made of brass and inlaid with precious stones. This was erected by the present, the eighth, Hu-tuk-tu in recognition of the restoration of his eyesight.

In the Kurin is situated the "Gando" university, which is the home of 10,000 professors, priests and scholars. Three students were being examined when Mr. Perry-Ayscough visited it. "The candidates, who must have attained the age of 50, sit in the middle of the hall wearing yellow caps and gowns. They are then cross-examined by their fellow students, who approach them up a centre aisle and shout questions at them, at the same time clapping their hands and gesticulating wildly within a few inches of the examinees' faces. The questions asked and being debated were:

"(1) Does the mountain called Bukung Bura mentioned in the book of Buddha rest in the ocean or on the ocean?"

"(2) What is the difference between a man sitting on a tree and a man standing on the ground?"

"The examinees sit behind the candidates and record the questions and answers in bulky looking books."

"South of the city is the sacred mount of Bogdo, which embraces a dense forest, a sanctuary for its sacred inhabitants, birds, beasts, wolves, leopards, wildcats, foxes and deer, who protected by stringent laws against their destruction roam about at will and become quite tame and docile. This sacred mountain overshadows the palace of the Hu-tuk-tu, or Living Buddha."

"He lives here with his wife, a masterful woman who has a great influence over him, and his little son of 10 years, who he hopes may some day succeed him on his temporal and spiritual throne. Near by is a small collection of temples, in one of which lives the Hu-tuk-tu's brother, the Chol Gin Lama, the Astrologer Royal and Oracle in Chief."

One of the great yearly events is an archery contest. "Some of the bows are fully six feet in length and the arrows three feet long with a stone let in at the business end. Princes, easily discernible by the peacock's feathers in their hats, and subjects all take their turn at this practice. The ranges measure as much as 400 yards. This little byplay seemed to show that the Mongols have not altogether lost their fighting qualities."

In Mongolia and in Tibet the form Buddhism takes is what may be called Lamaism, or Monastic Communism. Buddha to them is the highest form of intelligence. In other words, the perfect man, and their object of worship is some person whom the Lamas decide to be

the one in whom the spirit of Buddha dwells. When the Dalai Lama dies the Lamas select some child to take his place, into whom they affirm the spirit of Buddha has passed. The present Dalai Lama was selected because his birthplace, his parents and himself were seen in a vision by the Chief Lama of Galdan Monastery, who proceeded to the spot and found the infant.

Of lower degree than the Dalai Lama are the Hu-tuk-tus, or saints, the name being derived from a Mongol word meaning "The one who returns again." The chief Hu-tuk-tu is said to be the reincarnation of Taranatha, who translated the Buddhist Gospels into the Mongol tongue. It is authoritatively stated that one-third of the male population of Mongolia become Lamas.

That Lamaism has an extraordinary hold on the Mongol people is quite obvious to even the most unobtrusive traveller in their country. Pilgrims journeying to Urga can constantly be seen making their slow way there on foot, at every pace or two falling down on their faces, making obeisance to their Hu-tuk-tu, in the direction of Urga. These pilgrims will continue this

slow and awkward progress for perhaps 100 miles before reaching Urga.

The inside of a Lama temple has an almost mysterious fascination. The whole atmosphere, the pervading smell of incense, the little altars here and there with candles, offerings and small incense bowls on them remind one of Roman Catholic oratories. The Lamas, young and old, chant their service, which sounds strangely like a Gregorian chant; the younger members, like the proverbial choir boy, talk and laugh during the service.

The singers have in front of them the words written in Tibetan characters and the chant continues for an endless time. The sole education of the lower order of the Lamas simply consists in learning by heart to read these religious services.

Mr. Perry-Ayscough, after traversing Mongolia, returned to England via Siberia and St. Petersburg. On the way he travelled through Chuyuan Alps, whose scenery is said to be as fine as any in the Alpine region of Europe. The mountains are snow-capped. The River Chuya winds among them, at times with a rich green coloring reminiscent of the sea. The road runs along the river bank much of the way.

Mr. Perry-Ayscough met some of the Kirghiz in passing through Siberia and was impressed by one difference between them and the Tatars: "The Tatars have become very much like Russians and make successful merchants, whereas the Kirghiz have preserved their nomad habits, live in yurts and have most of their possessions in cattle. The Kirghiz men wear trousers, small skullcaps and cloaks. Their ladies are much like English Sisters of Mercy and wear white nun caps (with embroidery worked into the part that falls past the ears and under the chin), dresses and high heeled boots."